



DEMOCRACY REFORM TASK FORCE WEEKLY NEWS ROUND UP

March 9, 2018

NATIONAL NEWS

[What We Found in Trump's Drained Swamp: D.C. Insiders & Lobbyists](#)

ProPublica

When the Trump administration took office early last year, hundreds of staffers from lobbying firms, conservative think tanks and Trump campaign groups began pouring into the very agencies they once lobbied or whose work they once opposed. Today we're making available, for the first time, an authoritative searchable database of 2,475 political appointees, including Trump's Cabinet, staffers in the White House and senior officials within the government, along with their federal lobbying and financial records. Trump Town is the result of a year spent filing hundreds of Freedom of Information Act requests; collecting and organizing staffing lists; and compiling, sifting through and publishing thousands of financial disclosure reports.

[What Swamp? Lobbyists Get Ethics Waivers to Work for Trump](#)

The Associated Press

President Donald Trump and his appointees have stocked federal agencies with ex-lobbyists and corporate lawyers who now help regulate the very industries from which they previously collected paychecks, despite Trump's promises as a candidate to drain the swamp in Washington. A week after his inauguration, Trump signed an executive order that bars former lobbyists, lawyers and others from participating in any matter they worked on for private clients within two years of going to work for the government. But records reviewed by The Associated Press show Trump's top lawyer, White House counsel Don McGahn, has issued at least 37 ethics waivers to key administration officials at the White House and executive branch agencies. Though the waivers were typically issued months ago, the Office of Government Ethics disclosed several more on Wednesday. The White House had previously released more than a dozen waivers granted to its staff. One allows FBI Director Chris Wray "to participate in

matters involving a confidential former client.” The three-sentence waiver gives no indication about what Wray’s conflict of interest might be. The FBI declined to comment Thursday.

[Venturing Into the Swamp, Trump Dines with Major Donors](#)

The New York Times

President Trump dined at the ornate Georgetown home of a prominent Washington lawyer on Wednesday night with wealthy donors who are expected to play crucial roles in financing his re-election campaign. The dinner was the latest in a series of donor events associated with a pair of independent groups — America First Policies and America First Action — that are aiming to raise \$100 million this year, mostly in large donations, to support Mr. Trump’s agenda and the election campaigns of allied congressional candidates. Attendees included donors and operatives who are working to raise money for the America First groups, such as the Dallas financial executive Roy W. Bailey and the Oklahoma oil billionaire Harold Hamm, as well as the president’s eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., according to someone briefed on the list of attendees and published reports. Mr. Hamm and Mr. Bailey are on the board of America First Policies, a nonprofit group that was created to advocate Mr. Trump’s agenda. America First Action, on the other hand, is a “super PAC” that is raising money to air advertisements in support of Republican congressional candidates allied with the president.

[Trump Organization Says It Removed Presidential Seal from Golf Markers](#)

The Hill

The Trump Organization said Tuesday that it has removed the presidential seal from tee markers at one of its golf courses after reports that the products may have violated federal law. A spokesperson for the organization told ABC News that the plaques were temporary. “The plaques were presented to the club by a small group of members, who are incredible fans of the President, in honor of Presidents Day weekend,” the spokesperson said. “They were temporary and have since been removed.” It was reported Monday by ProPublica that Eagle Sign & Design, a design and metalworking company, had filled an order for “Trump International” for dozens of tee markers featuring the seal for use at Trump golf courses. The use of the presidential seal for purposes other than government business is a violation of federal law punishable by fines or up to six months in prison.

[Trump Charges His Campaign Top Dollar to Rent a Trump Tower Office](#)

The Huffington Post

President Donald Trump’s re-election campaign last year spent over a half-million dollars for Trump Tower offices — a choice that put donors’ money into the president’s pocket, but provided workspace for at most a handful of staff. According to a HuffPost analysis of Federal

Election Commission filings, the monthly rent was more than what candidate Trump had been charging from June 2015 to March 2016, back when he was largely self-funding his campaign and when there were, on average, several dozen employees in the midtown Manhattan office. And while it is unclear why Trump's re-election campaign has rented so much room for so few people, its decision to do so has helped fill office space that appears to have become much more difficult to rent out since Trump won the presidency.

**Related Story: [Trump Tower Gift Shop Sells Various Tchotchkes with the Presidential Seal.](#)*

[Trump Is Systematically Backing Off Consumer Protections](#)

The Washington Post

President Trump and the regulators he appointed are taking a far less aggressive approach to consumer protection than their predecessors, delaying key regulations and imposing fewer penalties against financial institutions and other corporations accused of wrongdoing, according to a Washington Post review of available data and interviews with consumer advocates and government officials. At the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, for example, enforcement actions have dropped from an average of three-to-five each month during the past four years down to zero since a Trump appointee took charge of the agency in late November. The Labor Department has delayed full implementation of a rule requiring financial advisers to act in their clients' best interest. And the Department of Education has withdrawn Obama-era regulations meant to strengthen protections for student borrowers.

[Panama Hotel Owner Declares Victory and Trump's Name Is Removed](#)

The New York Times

A workman wielding a crowbar pried off the silver T-R-U-M-P name from the Trump International Hotel and Tower here in Panama City on Monday as the majority owner of the hotel declared victory in his fight to oust the American president's family business as managers of the property. The president's company, the Trump Organization, fired back with its own statement disputing that it permanently lost control of the property, its only current hotel venture in Latin America. The developments on Monday, the company said, actually "maintain the status quo." The dueling interpretations of the day's events reflected the chaotic nature of a dispute that has become an international spectacle and one of the biggest problems facing the president's company. The standoff has been playing out for nearly two weeks behind the scenes in Panamanian courtrooms and ministry offices as well as in plain sight.

[Trump's Legal Team: No #MAGA at the White House](#)

CNN

White House staff were reminded Wednesday of the restrictions they must follow after top aide Kellyanne Conway was reprimanded for violating the law prohibiting federal employees from using their official government capacity for partisan ends. The White House counsel's office sent a memo Wednesday night to staff highlighting the new Hatch Act guidance issued Monday by the Office of Special Counsel -- which is separate from the Justice Department's special counsel's office. President Donald Trump's legal team cautioned staff to remove all campaign materials from their workplaces now that his reelection efforts are underway. This includes bumper stickers, buttons, signs, T-shirts, and the "Make America Great Again" hats. On Monday, the Office of Special Counsel released a new set of guidelines that advised federal employees overall on what they can and can't do -- which stated that they could no longer show political support for Trump such as displaying memorabilia from his 2016 campaign, along with other restrictions. Wednesday's memo informed White House employees that they are subject to the same restrictions.

[Ethics Office Finds Kellyanne Conway Broke Law in Alabama Race](#)

Bloomberg

White House aide Kellyanne Conway twice violated the law that forbids officials from engaging in political activity in their government capacities with comments she made in television interviews about last year's Alabama Senate election, the Office of Special Counsel said in a report sent Tuesday to President Donald Trump. Special Counsel Henry Kerner said he was referring his office's findings to the president for "your consideration of appropriate disciplinary action" for her violations of what's known as the Hatch Act. Kerner's office oversees investigations of Hatch Act violations in the executive branch and isn't related to Special Counsel Robert Mueller or his investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. It is up to Trump to decide what, if any, action to take against Conway, a close aide who managed his 2016 presidential campaign. The White House disputed Kerner's findings.

**Related Story: [Conway Won't Say If She Was Punished Over Hatch Act Issue.](#)*

[Trump Picks Dow Chemical Lawyer for Key Role at EPA](#)

The Associated Press

President Donald Trump on Friday tapped a chemical industry insider to run the Environmental Protection Agency office that oversees emergency response to hazardous spills and cleanups of the nation's most toxic sites. The White House announced that Trump has nominated Peter C. Wright to serve as EPA's assistant administrator for Land and Emergency Management. Wright has worked as a corporate lawyer at Dow Chemical Co. since 1999. Despite Trump's campaign pledges to "drain the swamp" in Washington, Wright's nomination is the latest example of the president appointing corporate lawyers or lobbyists to supervise federal offices

that directly regulate their former employers. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said Wright is “exceptionally qualified” to lead the Office of Land and Emergency Management.

[EPA Appointee Gets Approval to Consult for Outside Clients](#)

The Associated Press

A key aide to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has been granted permission to make extra money moonlighting for private clients whose identities are being kept secret. A letter approving outside employment contracts for John Konkus — signed by an EPA ethics lawyer in August — was released Monday by Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The ethics official noted that Konkus’ outside contracts presented a “financial conflict of interest” and barred him from participating in matters at EPA that would have a “direct and predictable” financial benefit for his clients. Pruitt named Konkus, a Republican political consultant, to serve as the EPA’s deputy associate administrator for public affairs. His duties have included signing off on hundreds of millions in federal grants. The letter gave Konkus approval to work for at least two clients. Those names were blacked out by the agency before a copy was provided to Congress, citing a privacy exemption more typically used to protect personnel records and medical files. The letter said Konkus was also expected to take on additional private clients, advising them about “strategy, mail and media production.”

[Payday Lenders, Watchdog Agency Exhibit Cozier Relationship](#)

The Associated Press

The former CEO of a payday lending company that had been under investigation by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has asked to be considered for the top job at the watchdog agency, The Associated Press has learned. Such a request would have been extraordinary in the years when the agency was run by an Obama appointee and often targeted payday lenders. Along with recent actions taken by the CFPB, it suggests a cozier relationship between industry and regulator since the Trump administration took over in November. Under Mick Mulvaney, Trump’s budget director and acting director of the CFPB, the bureau has taken a decidedly friendlier approach to the financial industry including cutting down on enforcement and dropping investigations or lawsuits against payday lenders and other companies. It has also proposed to revise or rescind many rules put into place by Richard Cordray, the first permanent director of the agency, including some that would have put additional restrictions on payday lenders. Under Cordray, the CFPB opened an investigation into lending practices at World Acceptance. On Jan. 22, the company said the investigation had been completed without enforcement action. It also said CEO Janet Matricciani had resigned after 2 ½ years in that position.

[Zinke Signed Order in January Making 'Acting' Directors Official](#)

The Hill

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke gave 10 of his acting directors more permanence in January, signing an order giving them most of the authority of a Senate-confirmed director. Signed under the radar, Zinke's Jan. 12 order gave the acting directors for such bureaus as the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service "temporary re-delegation of authority," according to the order obtained by watchdog group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). Under their new roles, the 10 employees filling in as acting directors and assistant secretaries during President Trump's transition period were elevated to official roles, so long as their jobs only entail "those functions or duties that are not required by statute or regulation to be performed only by the Senate-confirmed official occupying the position."

[Jeff Sessions Has a Huge Conflict of Interest in a Fed. Bribery Case](#)

Mother Jones

As Alabama's junior senator, Jeff Sessions was far more involved than previously known in helping two of his top contributors derail a federal environmental cleanup effort, according to records obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by *Mother Jones* and the Project on Government Oversight. The stalled cleanup is now at the center of a federal bribery case spearheaded by the Justice Department, posing a serious conflict of interest for Sessions, who is now attorney general. Yet there is no indication that Sessions has taken any steps to recuse himself from this matter. Last fall, the Justice Department indicted a top executive at Drummond Coal and two partners in the influential Birmingham-based law firm of Balch & Bingham, who were representing the Alabama-based company. Prosecutors allege the men paid off an Alabama state representative, Democrat Oliver Robinson, as they undertook an all-out effort to block an environmental remediation effort in an impoverished, largely African American neighborhood of North Birmingham, known as 35th Avenue. Robinson, who pleaded guilty to charges of bribery, conspiracy, and fraud, admitted signing his name to letters opposing the cleanup that were ghostwritten by the Balch & Bingham attorneys and to surreptitiously recording meetings with Environmental Protection Agency officials.

[New Guidelines Bar Federal Employees from Campaign Activities](#)

CNN

Now that President Donald Trump is officially running for re-election, federal workers need to leave their Make America Great Again hats at home or risk violating election law, the Office of Special Counsel said Monday. The Office of Special Counsel is the federal agency responsible for enforcing the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from engaging in politics while on the job, in uniform, or using government resources. It released a new set of

guidelines Monday that advises federal employees on what they can and can't do. (OSC is not related to the investigation of Justice Department special counsel Robert Mueller.) "This prohibition is broad and encompasses more than displays or communications (including in-person and via email or social media) that expressly advocate for or against President Trump's reelection," the guidance states. Until now, federal employees were free to bring memorabilia from his 2016 campaign to the office, or hang non-official photos of Trump in their offices -- so long as they did not indicate support "for or against his re-election in 2020," according to a OSC determination last year.

[DOJ & FEC Complaints Urge Investigation of Illegal Coordination](#)

Common Cause

Today, Common Cause filed complaints with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Election Commission (FEC) alleging reason to believe that President Trump and his campaign, Vice President Pence and his leadership PAC, the Republican National Committee (RNC), and a number of aides violated numerous campaign finance laws by coordinating "soft money" fundraising and spending with the Super PAC America First Action (AFA) and the dark money group America First Policies (AFP). As the complaints state, "America First Action and America First Policies, not only were founded by President Trump, his campaign committee, the RNC and their agents – but continued to work in cooperation, consultation, and concert with President Trump, his campaign committee, the RNC and their agents." Multiple reports and public filings reveal that the President and the RNC treated the outside groups, able to raise and spend in unlimited amounts, as extensions of the campaign and party committee to direct as they saw fit. America First Action and America First Policies raised and spent millions of dollars apparently at the direction of the President and the RNC and are ramping up their fundraising and coordination for the 2018 midterm and 2020 presidential elections.

[Companies Court Lawmakers with Charitable Giving, Don't Disclose Funds](#)

The Center for Public Integrity

In August, a nonprofit group dedicated to archiving the official and personal papers of Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, gathered donors for golf at an "authentic yet refined" luxury mountain resort boasting "the largest spa in Utah." The fundraising event was also an opportunity to spend two days with Hatch himself — the powerful chairman of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee.... Companies and trade associations that spent much of 2017 seeking to influence landmark tax legislation, which Hatch took a leading role in shaping, were hit up for the soiree. Among them: Merck & Co., which, like almost every other big company last year, was lobbying for favorable tax provisions. Among other contributors writing checks to the Orrin G. Hatch Foundation in four- and five-figure amounts last August: the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America and Visa, Inc. Top donors reportedly gave \$100,000 or more.

[State Dept. Granted \\$120M to Fight Russian Meddling. It Has Spent \\$0](#)

The New York Times

As Russia's virtual war against the United States continues unabated with the midterm elections approaching, the State Department has yet to spend any of the \$120 million it has been allocated since late 2016 to counter foreign efforts to meddle in elections or sow distrust in democracy. As a result, not one of the 23 analysts working in the department's Global Engagement Center — which has been tasked with countering Moscow's disinformation campaign — speaks Russian, and a department hiring freeze has hindered efforts to recruit the computer experts needed to track the Russian efforts. The delay is just one symptom of the largely passive response to the Russian interference by President Trump, who has made little if any public effort to rally the nation to confront Moscow and defend democratic institutions.

[Mueller's Focus on Adviser to Emirates Suggests Broader Investigation](#)

The New York Times

George Nader, a Lebanese-American businessman, has hovered on the fringes of international diplomacy for three decades. He was a back-channel negotiator with Syria during the Clinton administration, reinvented himself as an adviser to the de facto ruler of the United Arab Emirates, and last year was a frequent visitor to President Trump's White House. Mr. Nader is now a focus of the investigation by Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel. In recent weeks, Mr. Mueller's investigators have questioned Mr. Nader and have pressed witnesses for information about any possible attempts by the Emiratis to buy political influence by directing money to support Mr. Trump during the presidential campaign, according to people with knowledge of the discussions. The investigators have also asked about Mr. Nader's role in White House policymaking, those people said, suggesting that the special counsel investigation has broadened beyond Russian election meddling to include Emirati influence on the Trump administration. The focus on Mr. Nader could also prompt an examination of how money from multiple countries has flowed through and influenced Washington during the Trump era.

**Related Story: [Adviser to Emirates with Trump Ties Is Cooperating with Special Counsel.](#)*

**Related Story: [Mueller Gathers Evidence of Effort to Establish Back Channel to Kremlin.](#)*

[Trump Is Implicated in Attorney's Stormy Daniels Payment for First Time](#)

The Washington Post

The headline on the Wall Street Journal's latest Stormy Daniels scoop is that Trump attorney Michael Cohen's \$130,000 payment to the porn star set off red flags and was reported to the Treasury Department. But what came next seems *much* more important. The Journal is also

reporting that Cohen couldn't get a hold of Trump late in the process and that he later complained that Trump hadn't reimbursed him for the payment to Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford: Mr. Cohen said he missed two deadlines earlier that month to make the \$130,000 payment to Ms. Clifford because he couldn't reach Mr. Trump in the hectic final days of the presidential campaign, the person said. Ms. Clifford was owed the money in return for signing an agreement that bars her from discussing an alleged sexual encounter with Mr. Trump in 2006, people familiar the matter said. After Mr. Trump's victory, Mr. Cohen complained to friends that he had yet to be reimbursed for the payment to Ms. Clifford.

**Related Story: [Daniels' Lawsuit Shows Trump Campaign Likely Broke Election Laws.](#)*

**Related Story: [Stormy Daniels Sues Trump, Says Hush Agreement Is Null.](#)*

**Related Story: [Stormy Daniels Lawsuit Opens Door to Further Trouble for Trump.](#)*

[U.S. Judge Questions Whether Trump Can Block Twitter Users](#)

Reuters

A federal judge on Thursday expressed skepticism about whether U.S. President Donald Trump can constitutionally block Twitter users whose views he does not like from following and responding to his own Twitter account. At a hearing in Manhattan federal court, U.S. District Judge Naomi Reice Buchwald asked Michael Baer, a lawyer with the U.S. Department of Justice arguing for Trump, whether letting the president bar users from @realDonaldTrump would violate their First Amendment free speech rights. She asked whether Twitter was different from a public town hall, where government officials would be unable to pull the plug from a microphone to mute speakers with unwelcome views. "Once it is a public forum, you can't shut somebody up because you don't like what they're saying," Buchwald said.

[New Fed. Rules for Social Media Ads May Not be in Place for Midterms](#)

The Washington Post

Proposed Federal Election Commission rules aimed at preventing foreign influence on U.S. elections through better disclosure of online political ad sponsors may not take effect before the 2018 midterms, the panel's Republican chairwoman said Thursday. "The commission has been reluctant to change the rules of the game in the middle of the election season, so that would be something we would want to seriously consider," Chairwoman Caroline Hunter told reporters. A delay by the FEC would probably leave the task of providing more transparency about who is seeking to shape public opinion online in the hands of tech companies. Facebook, Google and Twitter have all promised clearer labeling of political ads that run on their sites after revelations that they hosted content from Russian operatives aimed at stoking social and political unrest in the 2016 presidential race.

[Russian Trolls Led Effort to Hurt Romney Secretary of State Bid](#)

The Hill

Russian-backed trolls took to social media following President Trump's 2016 victory in an attempt to prevent Mitt Romney from being appointed as Secretary of State, according to the Wall Street Journal. The newspaper's analysis found that Kremlin linked accounts pushed messages calling Romney a "two-headed snake" and "globalist puppet" and also spread a petition to stop him from being nominated to the high-profile post. The Wall Street Journal's findings come after a New Yorker report suggesting that Russia attempted to push Trump toward a more pro-Russia State Department head. Romney had called Russia the U.S.'s top "geopolitical foe" in the 2012 elections, an idea that many at the time, including President Obama, dismissed. "It's not surprising that the Russian troll operation tried to do whatever it could to prevent [Mr. Romney] from being secretary of state," Ryan Williams, a political strategist and former Romney spokesman, told the Journal.

[Low Transparency, Low Regulation Online Political Ads Skyrocket](#)

Open Secrets

Digital advertising has been thrust into the spotlight as more information comes out about Russia's use of digital ads in the 2016 election, a strategy Facebook executive Rob Goldman believes "stoked fear and hatred amongst Americans." Political investment in digital outreach has skyrocketed in recent years, and both Barack Obama and Donald Trump revolutionized the use of digital advertising in their presidential campaigns. In 2014, digital ads made up less than 1 percent — or \$71 million — of political ad spending, according to a recent report by Borrell Associates, an advertising research group. In the 2018 midterms, spending on digital ads is expected to make up around 22 percent — or \$1.9 billion — of overall political advertising. That marked a 2,539 percent growth in spending on digital political advertising while other advertising mediums took a large dip, according to the report.

KEY OPINION

[Don't Weaken the Ban on Politics in the Pulpit](#)

The Los Angeles Times (Editorial)

One of President Trump's favorite bad ideas — making it easier for churches to endorse political candidates — is back. Among several so-called policy riders that Republicans hope to smuggle into an omnibus spending bill is a measure that would weaken the Johnson

Amendment, which has been part of the Internal Revenue Code for more than 60 years. Trump has said that he would like to "totally destroy" the amendment, which prohibits not only religious organizations but other nonprofits from participating in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, a candidate. "You've been silenced," Trump told an audience of pastors in 2016, but he promised that "we're going to get your voice back." Actually, the Johnson Amendment doesn't prevent churches from speaking about a wide array of political issues, and members of the clergy are even free to endorse candidates so long as they do so as individuals and not, for instance, from the pulpit as representatives of their church. Churches aren't free as institutions to back or oppose candidates, but that's a fair tradeoff for the financial benefits they receive from tax-exempt status.

[The Trump Administration's Undrained Swamp](#)

National Review (Op-Ed)

If ever there were a crew less suited to drain the swamp in Washington, the Trump team would have to be it. Remember Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price? You may not, since his tenure was less than nine months long. But in that time, according to Politico, he ran up \$400,000 in private-plane trips and \$500,000 for military flights to Asia, Africa, and Europe. There were also questions raised about his private investment in a company that stood to benefit from his public action. Being profligate with taxpayer money is swampy, isn't it? ... The Trump team does love its luxury air travel. ... And then there is the Trump family itself. I will leave to forensic accountants the complicated web of loans and investments and connections Jared Kushner brought with him to the swamp (and repeatedly failed to include on disclosure documents). But it seems that just one of the reasons his security clearance was downgraded this week involved accepting loans from a private equity billionaire named Joshua Harris.

[Ethics Experts: The Problem with Jared Kushner in the White House](#)

CNN (Op-Ed by Fred Wertheimer)

Jared Kushner challenged two core government integrity principles when he went to work at the White House as a senior adviser with broad domestic and international policy responsibilities. Kushner refused to fully divest his business interests and insisted on retaining a large majority of his holdings in the Kushner real estate companies, and he holds real estate and other investments valued, according to The New York Times, citing ethics documents, at as much as \$761 million. In so doing he opened the door to what may be serious conflicts of interest -- and certainly to the appearance of such conflicts. Kushner was also hired for the position by his father-in-law, who happens to be President of the United States. In so doing, he effectively invited individuals and companies to provide financial benefits to him to gain influence with his boss and close relative, President Donald Trump. He also invited questioning by the American people about whether he was qualified for the extraordinarily

broad portfolio of responsibilities his father-in-law gave him, with zero experience in most of these areas.

[Washington Broken Before Trump](#)

The Intelligencer (Op-Ed by Albert Hunt)

Yes, Washington is broken under President Donald Trump. But it was broken long before Trump came to town, and there's no reason to expect his departure to fix it. That's the message of "Our Damaged Democracy," a new book by Joseph Califano, the former U.S. health secretary and veteran Washington hand.... Reforming this insidious system should be easy enough, requiring little more than public financing of campaigns coupled with incentives to keep contributions small. Public funding of presidential campaigns was introduced in 1976, and for a while it worked. Then politicians punched loopholes, a series of foolish Supreme Court decisions reopened the door to unrestricted spending and secret campaign donations, and public financing withered. Congress could require full public disclosure of all contributions. Instead, the current Congress is considering, behind closed doors, the opposite: widening existing loopholes in the remaining restrictions on campaign money. It's an incumbent protection scam, and incumbents love it.

[With 2018 Midterms Approaching, Our Elections Are Not Protected](#)

The Hill (Op-Ed by Trevor Potter)

Intelligence chiefs are warning Americans that Russia sees the upcoming 2018 midterm elections as a chance to continue its online campaign to deepen our country's political divisions. Left unaddressed, the gaps Russia used to interfere in the 2016 presidential election will be exploited to greater effect in 2018 and beyond. We are going into another election cycle with no cop on the beat to police foreign interference, or to enforce the other laws that protect the American electoral system. Together, three agencies have primary jurisdiction over elections: the Federal Election Commission (FEC), the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). That department last year designated elections as a part of our nation's critical infrastructure. DHS has been meeting with state officials to say this is a very serious matter they need to concentrate on.

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